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ABSTRACT

This second booklet aimed at stakeholders in South Africa's early childhood development (ECD) system focuses on two areas related to how learning in the country is going to be designed, assessed, and recognized by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Part 1 examines the new approach being established as the foundation of the country's education and training system: outcomes-based education (OBE). The section explains OBE and describes how it will be applied through the NQF. Part 2 discusses the process of developing standards for the accreditation of ECD practitioners. The process will set up and test interim standards and interim accreditation in the short term, with the aim of developing final policy on standards and guidelines for accreditation of ECD practitioners. Topics covered in this section include proposals about: the levels of qualifications for ECD practitioners, the level descriptors for each of the qualification levels, the kinds of qualifications that are needed for ECD, a framework for unit standards, and methods of assessment. As in the first booklet, the information is presented as a discussion between a person from the National Educare Forum (producers of the booklet) and a group of parents and ECD practitioners. A glossary is included to introduce new terms related to these policy issues. (EV)

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EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR BEGINNERS

Booklet 2

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- ☆ Towards an outcomes-based education
- ☆ Developing standards for ECD practitioners

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Early Childhood Development Policy For Beginners
Booklet 2

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* "Early Childhood Development Policy for Beginners, Booklet 1"
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* "Outcomes Education in South Africa"
Compiled by the Department of Education, March 1997.
* "Outcomes-Based Education: Rethinking Teaching"
by Dr Roy Killen (Australia), October 1996.
* "On Outcome-Based Education: A Conversation with Bill Spady"
by Ron Brandt (USA), 1993.
* "Standards for Early Childhood Development Practitioners -
A Consultative Document"
produced by the Interim Accreditation Committee, May 1997.
* "Response to Proposals for ECD Standard-Setting for the National Pilot Project"
May 1997.

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The first booklet on Early Childhood Development Policy for Beginners was published by the National Educare Forum.

The NEF has recently been working with other stakeholders in Early Childhood Development in order to present a broader view of this field. As a result, this second booklet is being produced by the National Educare Forum Consortium.

The National Educare Forum Consortium includes:

* The National Educare Forum
* The Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD)
* The Centre for Cognitive Development (CCD)

The CECD and the CCD add value to the Early Childhood Development National Pilot Project because of their expertise and experience in early childhood development and training.

This booklet was partly funded by the Northern Cape Education Department.

Many individuals also contributed to the production of this booklet:
Pat Siyoko, Tsidi Jonas and Greg Davis from the Northern Cape Education Department, Sedick Galant, Eric Atmore, Sharol Borgches, Ann Short, and Sandra Smidt.

We would appreciate it if individuals and organisations who make use of this booklet could give us comments on its usefulness.

Vernon Weitz
Director of NEF.

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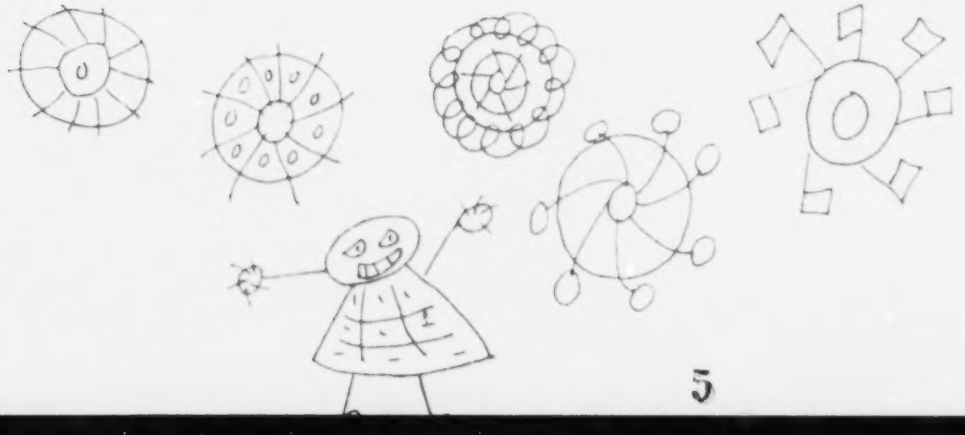


WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) ?

There may be many of you who are teachers, trainers, caregivers or parents who have not heard the term **Early Childhood Development.** It is the new way of talking about educare. Early Childhood Development is an approach to the education, care and development of our children that forms part of a much wider education and training policy that our new democratic government is shaping.

Educare is something that most of us are familiar with from the past. It involved the care and education of our children before they started formal schooling at the age of about 6. Early Childhood Development is about the same care and education. It is about developing lifeskills in our children from birth. But it now also includes the first years of primary school. Right up to what we all know as standard one (now called grade three), is included in the concept of Early Childhood Development. These early years at primary school used to be called the junior primary phase. Now we call them the Foundation Phase of formal schooling.

So when we talk about Early Childhood Development, we are talking about the care, education and development of all children in South Africa, from their early years at home up to their first years in a primary school. This covers children up to the age of about nine years old.

In the past, when we spoke about educare, we called the adults who were involved in educare work, either teachers or caregivers. Now we have the term **Early Childhood Development Practitioners** to describe the people who work in Early Childhood Development.

In this booklet we will use the abbreviation **ECD** for Early Childhood Development. ***You will find a list of all the abbreviations that we use at the back of the booklet.***

Hi there! I don't know if you remember me. My name is Rachel. The last time we met was in the first Early Childhood Development Policy for Beginners booklet. It was published by the National Educare Forum at the end of 1996.

In that booklet, we introduced you to the **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**, and showed you how ECD fits into this wider education and training policy framework. We also described to you the **Reception Year Pilot Project** that is taking forward new policy and practice in ECD.

Well, time has passed since that booklet. And during that time more and more documents and policy ideas have been presented to us.

It is important that we, as parents, ECD practitioners, NGO workers, and community members, don't get left behind. We have to keep ourselves informed and get involved in policy development.

In this **Booklet 2 of ECD Policy for Beginners** we are going to focus on two areas that seem to be in the front of a lot of people's minds. Both of these things have to do with how learning is going to be designed, assessed, and recognised by the NQF. We have divided the booklet into two parts.

* **Part One**
The first thing that we will look at in this booklet, is the new approach that is being established as the foundation of our national education and training system. This is called an **Outcomes-Based approach to Education, or OBE.** We will help you to understand what this means and how it will be applied through the NQF.

* **Part Two**
The second thing that we will look at in this booklet is **the process of developing standards for the accreditation of ECD practitioners.** This process has already begun. It is supposed to set up, and test out, interim standards and interim accreditation in the short term. It also aims to develop final policy on standards and guidelines for accreditation for ECD practitioners for the long term.

This stuff is not easy! And what is especially difficult is the new language that is being used in policy development. Already you might be confused with words like "accreditation". Don't worry, part of the job of this booklet is to explain such things. ***We also have a glossary at the end of the booklet which gives you the meanings of the difficult words.***

Before we begin with Part One, it might be a good idea to see what we already know about the NQF. It will be like doing a warming-up exercise.

A NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK CROSSWORD PUZZLE

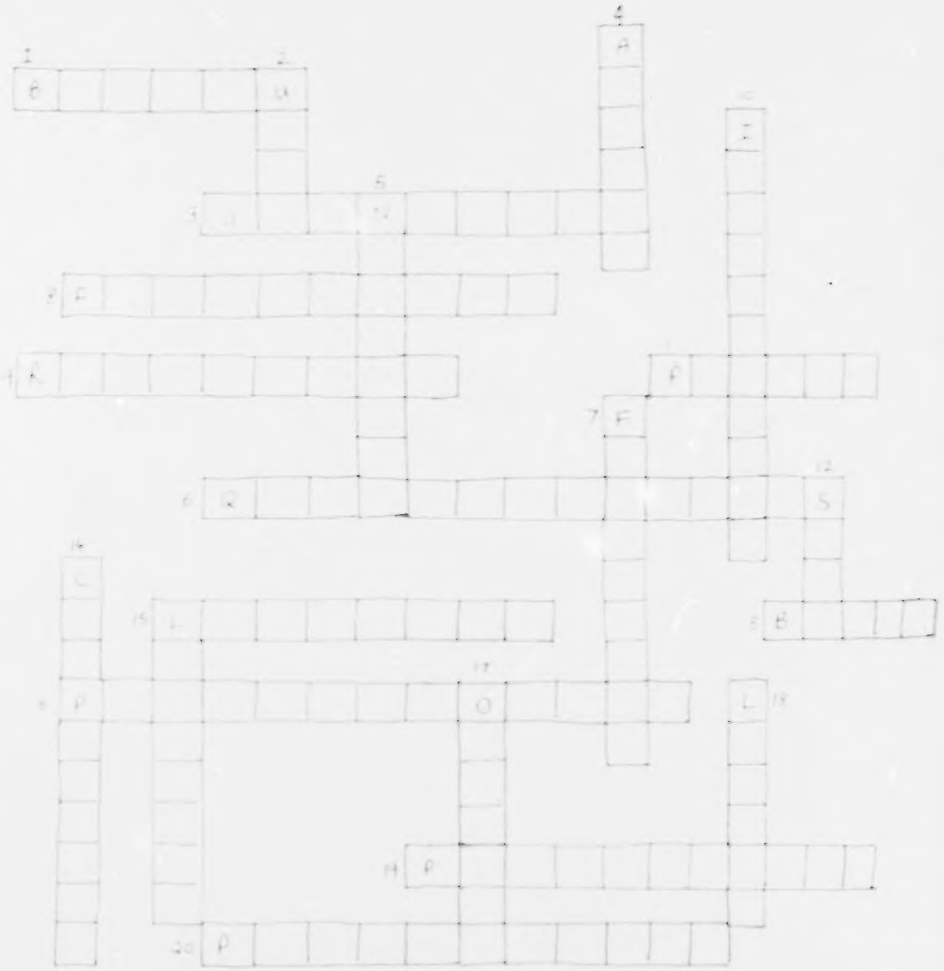
This crossword puzzle can help you in a few different ways:

* If you are already familiar with concepts and information relating to the NQF, then you can use the crossword puzzle to remind yourself of what you already know.

* If it is all Greek to you, then it might be better to wait until you have been through this book before you attempt the crossword puzzle.
* If you want to cheat you can get help from the glossary at the back of the booklet.

THE QUESTIONS

* 1 across: the Minister of Education
* 2 down and 3 across: the credits that make up a qualification
* 4 down: to measure someone's ability
* 5 down, 6 across, 7 down: our new framework for education and training
* 8 across: the phase of primary schooling up to grade 3
* 9 across: the year between preschool and grade 1
* 10 down: putting education and training into one system
* 11 across: the age-groups or development stages that we organise children into for education purposes
* 12 down: the abbreviation for the authority which has overall responsibility for developing and implementing the NQF
* 13 across: a broad grouping of levels of qualification on the NQF
* 14 down: a person's ability to perform in an area of work
* 15 across and 15 down: ongoing education and training
* 16 across: the new word for teachers and care-givers
* 17 down: the desired result of a learning process
* 18 down: positions on the NQF where qualifications are awarded
* 19 across: the ability to move from one area of learning to another
* 20 across: the ability to keep moving to higher levels of education and training



PART ONE
TOWARDS AN OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

In Booklet 1 you met four people working in Early Childhood Development who were learning about the NQF for the first time. They have become quite involved in workshops and discussions about education policy in the areas where they live. As a result, they have developed the confidence to run training sessions themselves. In this booklet, I am going to sit back a bit and let them tell you about OBE.

Let me introduce them to you:
This is George with the cap on. Funeka is the young woman here, next to her is Andile, and lastly we have Yvonne. Yvonne is going to start off our presentation.

1. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Molweni, my friends.
My name is Yvonne and I am going to introduce this thing of an Outcomes-Based approach to Education to you.
From now on we will call it **OBE.**

The kind of education and training system that is being developed through the NQF, is one that is based on **learning outcomes.** This is an approach to learning that we are not very familiar with in our own experience, but in the end, you will see that it is really common sense. An outcome is something that comes out at the

end, it is a result. To explain to you the meaning of OBE, we cannot just give you one definition and be happy with that. We are going to build up a picture from different points of view.

To start with, I want you to ask the person next to you a question. Ask that person,

> "What do you think is the purpose of education? Why do want and need education?"

I am sure that you all hear different answers. I am sure that you hear things like:

> "Education is important so we can be informed" or,
> "Education is important so that we can get jobs."

I am sure that all of the answers that you hear are true. I feel that the best answer is one that can hold all the other answers - **the real purpose of education is to prepare us for life.**

Let us take this idea further. If the purpose of education and training is to prepare us for life, then it must empower us to do many different things - real life things. Here we are talking about work, about relationships, about political involvement, about community work, about cultural life, about all the things that cross our path every day.

To prepare ourselves for life must involve learning how to make decisions, solve problems, and do real things in the world. What is important is not how much knowledge you have in your head, but how you perform in practice. And it is your performance, that is the most important result, or outcome, of your learning. So, the best way to see what you have learned is to see what you can do. We call this "assessing a person's competence" in a certain area of work or life.

Now, I am sure that all of this sounds quite obvious to you. But we are facing a problem. Our schooling, today and in the past, has not really been designed to prepare us to do things in life. This is also true of higher education and training. I am not saying that everything we have learned is useless. What I am saying, is that it could be a hundred times better.

What most of us can truly say about our education, is that it was about remembering things, and not about doing things. This is because the job of learning information, or subject matter, was seen as the main purpose of education. An exam would test how much information you could remember, and if you did well in the exam then you could get a qualification for further study, or for a job. But life is not just about how well you can remember, or how much

information you have in your head. The bridge between that kind of education and real life is a very shaky one.

Let me summarise. What we are used to from our own schooling is an education system that is syllabus-based. This means that the first decision was always what information should be taught. How well you could perform in the world was not a big concern. What we want to develop is a new approach to education that is outcomes-based. **This approach says that the first decision must be what people should be able to do. When you have decided that, then you can think about what information, skills, values and attitudes are needed for that learning to take place.**

In the words of an American educationalist:

> "In outcomes-based education you develop the syllabus from the outcomes you want students to demonstrate, rather than writing objectives for the syllabus you already have decided on."
>
> (Spady 1988)

We will come back to the meaning of OBE just now. In the meantime, my friend George will help you to put this new approach to education into a wider picture.

2. OBE AND TRANSFORMATION IN EDUCATION

Thanks Yvonne. Hi folks, my name is George. I'm going to talk about Outcomes Based Education from a different angle. I think that the only way to really understand this new OBE approach, is to look at it as part of all the big changes we are trying to make.

The place to start is with our big political task. This is to take apart all the discrimination and oppression of apartheid, and to build a democracy. Socially and economically, our aim is to build a better life for all our people. This struggle for change, or transformation, must involve all areas of life – including education. Our first transformation task in education was to build a single national education system out of the scattered ruins of apartheid education. Only through a single system, under one government department, can we provide equal education for all.

There are a number of other important principles that we are using to guide us in our transformation of education. These include:

- the **integration** of education and training into one human resources development policy
- education and training must be **relevant** to economic, social, and political development
- we must offer a **high quality** of education and training
- our education and training must be acceptable nationally and internationally - it must have **credibility**
- we must allow **democratic participation** in the setting of standards and in policy-making, so that our education and training system has **legitimacy**
- we must give **recognition of prior learning** by giving people credits towards a qualification for their different kinds of learning experiences
- we must have a system of **guidance** for learners to help them make decisions about their education and training
- our system must allow easy **access** to any learner
- we must provide **equality of opportunity** for all learners, whatever their age or need
- we must have an education system that allows learners to move around within it according to their needs and interests - the system must have **coherence** and **flexibility**, and it must allow for **progression** and **portability**

These are the principles on which our new education and training system, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), is being built. These principles are there to guide us in our transformation of education and training in South Africa.

What the NQF aims to establish is a system that encourages **lifelong learning.** Lifelong learning is an important concept to understand. It helps us to see education and training as something that should never stop. We should always be finding ways to learn. We should always be looking for new ways to solve problems.

And this brings us back to the OBE approach to education. Nobody can get excited about lifelong learning if it is just about forcing yourself to remember more and more information. Lifelong learning is about improving your action in the world. Your improved action is the outcome of your learning.

In conclusion, I can say that **our change to OBE is one part of our wider attempt to transform education.** We want to move away from subject matter as

the basis for education. Instead, we must first decide what we want people to be able to do. With these planned outcomes in mind, we can then organise the syllabus, the time, the means of assessment, and the qualifications, to suit the outcomes.

Before I ask Funeka to take over, I think it would be useful for you to discuss the issues that we have been talking about. Could you please sit in groups of 3 people. You must each take one of the following questions, prepare yourself for a few minutes, and then give your opinions to the other 2 people in the group.

> * How valuable was your own education? What did it prepare you for in life?
> * What kind of transformation are we trying to bring about in education in South Africa?
> * What does it mean to say that our learning should be based on an outcome and not on a syllabus?

3. LOOKING DEEPER INTO OBE

Greetings, my name is Funeka, and I have been given the most difficult section to present to you!

We are now going to look more deeply into this Outcomes-Based approach to Education. We understand that this approach means that people **demonstrate their learning**. This means that people must be able to apply their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. OBE is not simply interested in testing whether people have learnt a certain amount of information in a certain amount of time.

When we talk about learners demonstrating the outcome of what they have learnt, we are not talking about narrow specific skills like spelling, or grammar, or remembering dates in history. **A learning outcome must involve learners showing their ability to bring together and apply a range of related skills to a problem.** We want them to be challenged by a real life situation with its variety of demands.

An example could be to ask learners who are learning social sciences to put forward proposals for a new public transport system to the municipality. Their

proposals must take into account safety, pollution, rush-hour problems, and costs. You can see that for a student to demonstrate this outcome, she or he needs to bring together language and mathematical skills, and to draw on learning experiences in natural, social and economic sciences. What examples of useful learning outcomes can you think of from your area of work?

OBE is not just a system that was made up by someone clever. It is based on a belief that all people are able to learn and act in the world.

> * Everyone can learn and everyone is capable of success and excellence in learning.
> * It is the responsibility of an education and training system to develop and encourage peoples' ability to learn.
> * Not everyone learns at the same pace or in the same way.
> * It is the responsibility of an education and training system to find ways for learners to succeed. It must not apply rigid frameworks that encourage people to fail.

OBE is guided by the following principles:

* **Setting a clear outcome: (Where are we going?)**
An outcomes-based education system must be guided by a clear focus. The purpose or intended outcome that is decided on for any learning area, must be defined by a careful investigation into what is, and will be, useful and necessary in real life. That outcome must be future-looking, practical, useful, socially valuable, and morally and ethically progressive. Learning outcomes that become the purpose of learning, must be made explicit to the learners. The learners themselves must see them as challenging and useful.

* **Design backwards from your outcome: (How do we get there?)**
Once a destination or goal has been decided on, then you can consider the best way of getting there. What skills, values, attitudes and competencies are needed to achieve this learning outcome? What are the relevant issues and problems? What are the most suitable learning methods? What subject matter is useful? How can we assess our progress? In what ways can learners demonstrate their learning?

In this way the subject matter of learning takes its proper place. It is now a vehicle that will help the learner to get somewhere. When we think in this way, we can see that it is not so useful to organise education and training around rigid academic subjects. We need learning areas that are closer to real life.

* **Don't be ruled by time:**
The education that we are used to has always been strictly ruled by time. The bell rings after 45 minutes. You have to write down all that you know in a two-hour

examination. You have to complete the syllabus in one year. An OBE approach says that this "tyranny of time" must be thrown in the rubbish bin. It has nothing useful to do with learning. Time must be used as a flexible resource so that an education and training system can accomodate and encourage learners with different learning rates and aptitudes. Also, learners must be given a number of opportunities and a variety of ways to show what they can do with their learning.

* **Be learner-centred:**
Education and training must be learner-centred so that learners can take responsibility for their own development. What happens in a classroom must be less about what the teacher "teaches" and more about activities and methods which encourage learners to learn. This development should be collaborative between learners, and not competitive. Learners should be assessed in relation to a desired result or outcome, and not against other learners.

OBE also emphasises how knowledge is applied, rather than how much knowledge a person has in their head. We all know that you can read every book there is about driving a car, but that will not mean that you can drive. To show that you can drive a car you need to apply your knowledge. What is important is the **output** of the learner, rather than the **input** of the teacher.

By now you should understand some of the important features of an outcomes based approach to education. Some of this stuff has been quite heavy. For a bit of light relief, Andile will now put the whole thing of OBE to you in a different way.

4. A JOURNEY FROM JOHANNESBURG TO CAPE TOWN

Imagine that you are part of a group of people who have decided to travel to Cape Town. You all live in Johannesburg. Cape Town, you have decided, is your destination. What is important is to get there. You are all motivated, and you have a useful reason for wanting to get there.

Now you start to discuss other things. The things that come second. You discuss what route to take, how to travel, and how long you will spend on the journey. You have different opinions, based on your interests and needs. Some of you want to go fast by plane. Others, choose, or are forced, to go more slowly. So there

are buses, trains and cars. Even then, different people choose different routes. Some want to keep inland, others want to travel down the coast.

There are different ways to get to the same destination; different ways to achieve the same outcome. Of course we cannot just pull anything out of the hat. If you travel north from Johannesburg you will never reach Cape Town. It will also take you a very long time if you choose to walk. You have to make choices that are appropriate to your intended journey and destination.

Depending on the route you take and the vehicle you choose, you will have different experiences and you will use different ways of assessing your progress towards your destination. Maybe someone changes their route half-way. Maybe someone else's car breaks down and they have to catch a bus. Maybe another person decides to break the journey, and spend a month in Port Elizabeth. However you all get there, in the end you can all say "We have arrived in Cape Town". That was the desired outcome.

This story is common sense. But imagine if people did things the other way around. Imagine if my first decision was to say "I want to fly in a plane", or "I want to drive on the N2", or "I want to travel quickly", and then my second decision was about where I wanted to go. Not many people plan their journeys like that. It would almost be as silly as mistaking a syllabus for a learning outcome!

I hope that this story has helped you to see how sensible an OBE approach to education and training is. Yvonne will now take us back to more serious things.

5. OBE AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Let us now take this concept of OBE and see how it is influencing other aspects of our transformation of education in South Africa. At the end of July 1996, the Department of Education launched a national curriculum-development process for school-based learning. Moving away from a traditional definition of school subjects, the new curriculum is being developed around **8 Learning Areas:**

- Language, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences
- Human and Social Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Technology
- Arts and Culture
- Economic and Management Sciences
- Life Orientation

Learning Area Committees (LACs) were set up for each of these Learning Areas. The LAC's are made up of a wide group of education experts and organisations that are involved in education and training. One of the tasks of these committees was to establish education and training outcomes for the learning areas. In other words, they had to design **Learning Area Outcomes** for each Learning Area in the curriculum. Together with these outcomes, the LAC's have also developed criteria that will be used to assess the outcomes.

When we talk about a **curriculum** we are usually referring to a whole system of learning. The 8 Learning Areas that we listed above make up the new school curriculum. But the curriculum does not say what must happen in a classroom. It is also not the job of the LAC's to say what will happen in the classroom. The LAC's are deciding on outcomes or goals that learners must reach. But something else is needed to help teachers and learners to reach these outcomes.

In the past, teachers used to have a **syllabus** to guide them in the classroom. It told them what to teach, and how long to spend on certain topics. It looked like an exam paper without the question marks. The plan now, is to replace the subject-based syllabus with **learning programmes** for use in the actual learning situation.

A learning programme is a guide which teachers and learners can use to achieve nationally agreed education outcomes. Such a programme contains the learning outcomes that have to be achieved, as well as guidelines for how achievement can be assessed. This not only covers final outcomes and final assessments, but also includes outcomes for phases of learning, and ways of assessing progress.

A learning programme structures the learning into courses or units. It also offers learning materials and methodologies which can be used to help learners reach the outcomes.

While a learning programme is related to a certain Learning Area of the curriculum, it need not be restricted to a certain subject, the way a syllabus used to be. A learning programme tries to bring together, or integrate, different skills, disciplines, and learning experiences. For example, a learning programme related to the Learning Area of Arts and Culture might require exploration of politics, language, and geography, as well as subject matter that is more strictly artistic and cultural.

Just when you might be feeling happy with what we are saying, we now have to make things a bit more complicated. An outcome is not just one thing. There are two different kinds of outcomes. George will explain this to you.

6. CRITICAL OUTCOMES AND SPECIFIC OUTCOMES.

Hello again.

* First of all, we have **Critical Outcomes.**

Critical Outcomes are very broad goals for all areas of education and training. These are skills, understandings, values and attitudes, that it is important for everyone to develop in life. All learning experiences must facilitate the development of these general skills, attitudes and experiences.

After wide consultation and discussion the **South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)** has developed a set of 7 Critical Outcomes. These include skills and abilities like decision-making, problem-solving, communication, and working with others.These general Critical Outcomes provide the foundation for Specific Outcomes.

* Secondly, a **Specific Outcome** takes us down to more concrete outcomes.

About 8 to 10 specific outcomes have been established for each of the 8 Learning Areas of the curriculum. It refers to certain skills, knowledge, understandings, attitudes and values that are needed in a certain situation or context. That situation or context could be a job or a school subject or an area of work. For example, a Specific Outcome in the learning area of Language, Literacy and Communication, states:

"The learner must be able to use language to communicate verbally and through writing."

Over now, to Funeka.....

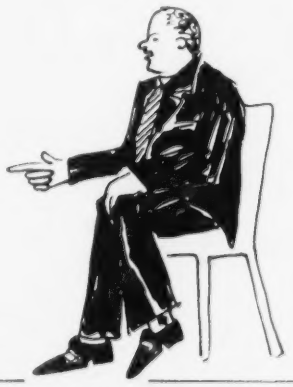
7. ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION IN OBE

As we develop education and training outcomes, as well as learning programmes to achieve those outcomes, we also have to develop ways of assessing and giving credit to learners.

Learning outcomes will be assessed according to specified performance criteria. A number of outcomes then make up what is called a **unit-standard.** Every unit-standard carries a certain number of credits. It is a block of credits which go towards a learner's **qualification.** When a learner has enough credits to receive a qualification, it means that the person has achieved **competence** in that area of learning.

I'm now going to ask Andile to bring Part One of this booklet to a close.

8. QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



Thank you. I would like you to divide into 3 groups. Each group will prepare a short presentation to the plenary following the questions below:

* **Group 1**: What makes an OBE system of education and training different from the present system that we have?
* **Group 2**: What is a Learning Programme and how should it be designed?
* **Group 3**: What are the 2 different kinds of outcomes in the system we are developing? How are the 2 linked up to one another?

* For general discussion in the plenary we would like all 3 groups to consider the following question:
Do you think that there should be outcomes set for children during the years before grade 1? What kind of outcomes could these be?

PART TWO
DEVELOPING STANDARDS FOR ECD PRACTITIONERS

1. INTRODUCTION

In this second part of the booklet we want to discuss the process of setting standards for qualifications for ECD practitioners. The reason for doing this, is so that you can get involved in the discussions and decision-making, and so that you can think about your own learning and career path.

(a) The decisions we have to make about standards and qualifications

When we talk about **"developing standards for ECD practitioners"** what do we mean?

Well, we mean that we have to develop a system of qualifications for all people working in ECD. This means that we have to establish:

* What qualifications are needed for ECD practitioners and at what levels these qualifications would fit into the NQF.
* What general abilities are needed for each level of qualification. The way that we describe these abilities is called, level descriptors.
* What kinds of qualifications are needed at each level, in order to suit the age of children being worked with and the setting in which practitioners work.
* What kind of unit standards we want as the building blocks for ECD qualifications.
* In what ways ECD practitioners should be assessed and who should do the assessments.

Before we go forward to look at these questions, let us take a step back, so that we can see where these questions are coming from.

(b) The ECD Pilot Project

You might remember from our first booklet on ECD Policy for Beginners, that the Directorate of ECD and Junior Primary Education is implementing a 3-year ECD Pilot Project. This project focuses on the development of a **Reception Year** (as the year linking preschool to grade one), in non-formal ECD settings.

In that booklet, I explained that government funding for the Pilot Project would go in five directions. One of those directions was: "Training and accreditation of ECD practitioners working in services that are involved in the pilot project."

One of the main objectives of the 3-year ECD Pilot Project is to test out and further develop a range of interim decisions about ECD. In this way, the Pilot Project will be used to establish ECD within the NQF and to develop long term policy for ECD.

This means that our present discussion about the development of standards and qualifications for ECD has to have the immediate Pilot Project in mind, as well as long-term policy. In other words, we have two kinds of decisions to make:

* **Short-term decisions:**
- to develop interim norms and standards in ECD
- to prepare for registration of ECD unit standards on the NQF
- to provide interim guidelines for the interim conditional accreditation of existing ECD practitioners

* **Long-term decisions:**
To develop a final policy and qualifications framework, norms and standards and guidelines for accreditation for ECD within the NQF.

(c) The process of consultation

In order to develop a system of accreditation for ECD practitioners, the Minister of Education established an **Interim Accreditation Committee (IAC).** The IAC is assisted by a **Technical Secretariat** which is made up of four people.

The IAC and it's Secretariat then set up a **Task Team** which wrote a "consultative document", which they presented to a national workshop in May 1997 for all major ECD roleplayers. What we are presenting to you in this part of the booklet comes from that document and that workshop.

The consultative document includes questions and proposals regarding qualifications, unit standards, and assessment methods, as well as substantial information about the present state of ECD. It says that our decisions about standard-setting need to take 4 factors into account:

* the present situation of qualifications and training in the ECD sector
* the problems and needs created by that situation
* the experience in other countries of developing qualifications frameworks
* our vision of how we want to develop ourselves as ECD practitioners

After the national workshop a second document, containing 7 proposals, was drawn up by the Task Team. The proposals in this document are based on areas of agreement that were established in the workshop. For each of the proposals in this second document, the Technical Secretariat of the IAC wants two kinds of responses.

Firstly, the IAC wants a response to general proposals that have been made around standards and qualifications for immediate implementation in the ECD Pilot Project. These responses will come out of provincial workshops by the end of July 1997. Once those workshops are completed, more detailed proposals on standards will be developed through further consultation. The IAC wants all decisions around the interim standards for the ECD Pilot Project to be finalised by the end of 1997.

Secondly, alongside each short-term proposal for the ECD Pilot Project, the IAC wants us to consider more long-term questions regarding the final development of standards and qualifications for the whole of the ECD sector. Unlike the Pilot Project with its specific focus on the Reception Year, the longer term decisions need to be made about the whole of the ECD sector, that is, for ECD work that covers the ages 0 to 9 years.

The rest of this booklet is going to be devoted to looking at these questions and proposals around standard-setting and qualifications. I am going to ask my friends George, Funeka, Yvonne, and Andile to assist me with going through these proposals. George will begin.

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2. PROPOSALS ABOUT THE LEVELS OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR ECD PRACTITIONERS.

The main question that we need to discuss here, for the ECD sector as a whole is: **"How many levels of qualifications are needed for ECD practitioners, and at what levels of the NQF should each ECD qualification be placed?"**
It is important for me to make one thing clear in the beginning so that nobody is confused. When we are talking about levels in this discussion, we are talking about levels on the NQF. These are not the same as the Educare levels that a lot of us are familiar with.

Yvonne will now outline the proposals that have been made in response to this question. As she does this, please refer to the NQF table on the next page so that you can see the bands and levels that she is talking about.

Two proposals were put forward in the Task Team's consultative document in response to this question.

The first proposal suggests:

*** We need a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) at NQF level 1.**

NQF BANDS	NQF LEVELS	EXISTING FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM		ADULT EDUCATION
HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND	8. DOCTORATE / FURTHER RESEARCH DEGREES	ADVANCED DEGREES		
	7. HIGHER DEGREES PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	HIGHER DEGREES	
	6. FIRST DEGREES / HIGHER DIPLOMAS	HIGHER DIPLOMAS	FIRST DEGREES	
	5. DIPLOMAS / OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATES	DIPLOMAS	OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATES	N6 N5 N4
FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND	4. SCHOOL / COLLEGE /	SENIOR CERT STANDARD 10	FETC GRADE 12	N3
	3. TRAINING CERTIFICATES	STD 9	GRADE 11	N2
	2. MIX OF UNITS FROM ALL	STD 8	GRADE 10	N1
GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND	SENIOR PHASE	STD 7 STD 6	GETC GRADE 9 GRADE 8	ABET 4
		STD 5 STD 4	GRADE 7 GRADE 6	ABET 3
	1. INTERMEDIATE PHASE	STD 3 STD 2	GRADE 5 GRADE 4	ABET 2
	FOUNDATION PHASE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT 0-9 YRS (RECEPTION)	STD 1 SUB B SUB A	GRADE 3 GRADE 2 GRADE 1	ABET 1
		PRE PRIMARY	RECEPTION	
	PRE SCHOOL	EDUCARE	PRE SCHOOL	

There are many women doing ECD work with children at home or in the community. These women often have low levels of literacy and education. They need to be given access to the NQF at level 1 so that the learning and skills that they have developed through their experience can be recognised, and so that they can get access to training.

*** We need a Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC) at NQF level 4.**
This level of qualification (which would cover NQF levels 2 - 4) would cover a lot of ECD practitioners. It would include many with formal qualifications, such as the N3 certificate from a technical college. It could also include the large number of ECD practitioners who have gained practical teaching ability through non-formal training courses

*** We need a various qualifications in the Higher Education and Training Band of the NQF (Levels 5 - 8).**
In order to make sure that the ECD sector is fully professional, and that it can always produce quality education and training, we need ECD qualifications at all four levels in the higher NQF band. Many formal qualifications, such as diplomas and degrees, are already covered by levels 5 and 6.

The second proposal, offered a challenge to the first proposal.
It argued that ECD practitioners should only be placed at Level 5 of the NQF. It says this for two reasons. Firstly, this proposal argues that practitioners who have had non-formal training will show, through assessment and further training, that they are as competent as people with formal qualifications at Level 5. Secondly, this proposal argues that we should only consider Level 5 and no lower level, because it is only there that education departments recognise practitioners as properly qualified educators.

Rachel will now give you some background information to help you think about proposed qualifications and levels.

When we look at these two proposals there are a number of things that we need to consider:

(a) We need to consider where we find ourselves at the moment in the ECD sector, with practitioners with a wide range of qualifications and experiences.

(b) We need to consider the problems and needs that are created by this variety of experience and qualification.

(c) We need to look at the requirements that have been set by SAQA for the registration of qualifications on the NQF.

I will touch on each of these considerations:

(a) ECD practitioners in South Africa today have arrived at their practice along one of **three different routes**. Each route has involved its own kind of learning and has led to different forms of practice. Each route also offers different learning and career opportunities:

* The first route taken by ECD practitioners is through a **university or college of education training.** The fields of learning covered by university and college courses are general to all school teacher training, with some specialisation according to the phase of intended teaching practice. Most of the qualifications focus either on the preprimary phase (3-6 age group), or on the junior primary phase (5-9 age group). Advanced diplomas and postgraduate degrees offer more specialised ECD training (like curriculum development).

* The second route taken by ECD practitioners is through a **technical college or technikon**. The fields of learning covered by their courses are specific to ECD practice. The courses prepare practitioners for teaching and for management. In most cases they qualify ECD practitioners only for working with children up to the age of 6 in day-care services that are outside the formal education system.

* The third route, which is taken by the majority of ECD practitioners, is through **non-formal training.** Some of this non-formal training has followed the SATIECE guidelines. Although there is often some local or provincial recognition of non-formal training, the status of these ECD practitioners is generally low.

The non-formal learning experienced by these practitioners usually involves a full integration of theory and practice. Learning is not organised around academic subjects, but around areas of work such as: work with self; work with children; work with adults; and work with systems.

Most of the work done by ECD practitioners with non-formal training is home-based or community-based, and covers the 0-6 age group. Some have also received specialist training in community development work, management, and curriculum design.

Although some colleges of education and technical colleges have developed ways of recognising non-formal learning, most ECD practitioners do not have access to

formal education and training. This is because they do not have a senior school certificate, and because they cannot meet the time demands of most formal courses.

(b) Our second consideration when we think about a new system of qualifications for ECD practitioners, is to look at some of the **problems and needs** that arise out of the present 3-route system.

* There is a danger of a two-track system becoming fixed. The one track being, "educare" work with children aged 0-6 being carried out by ECD practitioners with technical or non-formal training. These qualifications could be recognised as Welfare qualifications. The other track, producing proper "teachers" through universities and colleges, would be recognised as proper Education, Training and Development qualifications. Such a split of qualifications, would perpetuate the incorrect idea that "educare" work is not proper education or development work. It would affect the status and quality of ECD.

* This possible split, relates to another problem. That is the different approaches that are taken to the relationship between knowledge (theory) and practice (performance) by formal and non-formal training. There needs to be an agreed reformulation of this relationship so that all training has a common approach.

* We need to think carefully about the phases (age-groups) that ECD practitioner training is directed towards. It is unrealistic to expect all ECD practitioners to be competent to cover the whole 0-9 age group. We need to decide on what phases make most sense, so that specialised training and qualifications can be developed for specific phases. When we do this we must be careful not to link the level of the qualification to the age-group of children. Often, qualifications for very young children are given less value than qualifications for older children.

* In developing a new qualifications framework for ECD, we must consider where practitioner development is most needed.

- To establish equity we need to give priority to practitioners whose learning and experience is not formally recognised, and to those who do not have access to further learning and development.

- To improve the quality of much of ECD practice, we need to decide what areas need our first attention. It is in those areas that we must prioritise the setting of standards and the provision of training.

- To ensure that our efforts have impact, we need to give priority to the needs of the majority of ECD practitioners. For this reason we

need to pay particular attention to those working with the 2-6 age group who are untrained, non-formally trained, or who have a technical college qualification.

(c) Lastly, we need to look at the requirements that have been set by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for the registration of qualifications on the NQF.

SAQA says that a qualification needs to consist of at least 120 credits, although some exceptions might be considered. Of those 120 credits, 72 must be achieved at, or above, the level at which the qualification is registered.

Each qualification must be made up of credits from:

* Fundamental learning (eg. language and maths)
* Core and elective learning (eg. specific ECD learning)

At NQF Level 1, for example, 36 credits are needed from fundamental learning, and 36 from elective learning. Of the 36 fundamental learning credits, 20 must come from language learning, and 16 from maths, or numeracy.

What is important about the SAQA requirements, is the way that they will affect the access that ECD practitioners have to qualifications on the NQF. This is particularly important for the many practitioners who have years of non-formal training and experience, but who might struggle with basic literacy and numeracy.

This background information should help us to consider the question that George asked, ie.

> "How many levels of qualifications are needed for ECD practitioners, and at what levels of the NQF should each ECD qualification be placed?"

It should also help us to develop opinions about the two proposals that Yvonne put in front of us.

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Finally, on this issue, I'll ask Funeka to tell us what proposal came out of the national workshop in May.

Thank you Rachel.

I will read to you from the document:

"Based on consensus reached at the national workshop, it is proposed that the following specific NQF levels of qualification should be prioritised for standard-setting for the National Pilot Project:

* NQF Level 1 towards a General Education and Training Certificate
* NQF Level 4 towards a Further Education and Training Certificate which may also include unit standards at NQF levels 2 and 3 for measuring progress and as credits.
* NQF Level 5 towards a first diploma in ECD and recognition as a qualified teacher (educator) by the education departments.

It is further proposed that standard-setting will focus on the specialisation compenent (ECD) providing credits towards these qualifications, and that Resource and Training Organisations should advise practitioners regarding the general education requirements for obtaining full qualifications at the appropriate level."

Andile will now begin the next section.

3. PROPOSALS ABOUT THE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS FOR EACH OF THE QUALIFICATION LEVELS

Hi.
While we are deciding on what qualifications at what NQF levels we need for both the Pilot Project, and for long term ECD policy, we need to do something else as well.

We need to decide what **level descriptors** must go with each level of qualification. A level descriptor is simply a general description of what an ECD practitioner should be able to do at that level of qualification.

At the moment we only need to develop a set of draft descriptors. We can work on them again and again as we make final decisions on standards and qualifications. For the moment then, let me put the question to you like this:

"Do you think that the following proposed descriptors are suitable for five levels of qualification in the ECD sector? Do they cover all possible work roles and career possibilities?"

So it's over to George to present the proposed descriptors to you.

Here they are, following the words of the document.

"To guide the development of standards it is necessary to agree on general descriptions for each of the above levels. Therefore, the following level descriptors are proposed:

* ECD practitioners qualifying for a General Education and Training Certificate (NQF level 1) are able to understand and respond appropriately to the basic needs of young children in all areas of their development within a specified phase of development (age range) and in a specific context.

* ECD practitioners qualifying for a Further Education and Training Certificate (NQF level 4) are able to facilitate the all-round development of young children in a manner that is sensitive to individual needs (including special needs) within a specified developmental phase. Practical ability to plan, implement and evaluate an early childhood programme according to clearly defined curriculum guidelines, demonstrates an understanding of the underlying concepts and processes of learning and development.

* ECD practitioners qualifying for a first diploma at NQF level 5 are able to use their knowledge of child growth and development from birth to 9 years old, to guide their professional practice in working with young children in at least one developmental phase."

Two further proposals were made for ECD practitioners qualifying at NQF levels 6 and 7, but I think that we will leave these out of our discussion at the moment.

Yvonne will tell us what was proposed for the Pilot Project.

As far as the immediate proposal for level descriptors for the ECD Pilot Project is concerned, they are the same as the first 3 proposals above. These proposals correspond to the three qualifications that have been given priority for the Pilot Project for standard-setting.

Now its over to Funeka

4. PROPOSALS ABOUT THE KINDS OF QUALIFICATIONS THAT ARE NEEDED FOR ECD

Huh! Yvonne didn't have too much work to do there!

ECD practitioners have three areas of work. While some work in just one area, other practitioners work in two or all three. We need to look at what those three areas are, and at what kinds of qualifications are needed for specific kinds of work in those three areas. These three areas of work include working with children, working with adults, and working with systems. Let us look at each in a bit of detail:

* **Working with children.**

In ECD we are working with children between the ages of 0 and 9. The settings where we work can be different:

- Some of us work in formal group settings, like schools or community centre playgroups

- Some of us work in informal settings, like looking after small groups of children in our own homes
- Some of us work in family settings, where we offer various kinds of care, support or education to family members who are responsible for small children

It is being proposed that ECD practitioners, in their training and in their work, should focus on certain age groups. The groupings that are being proposed are:
0-3 years
2-6 years
5-9 years
Some qualifications could cover wider age groups, such as home-based childminding of the 0-6 age group.

*** Working with adults**

ECD practitioners work with adults in various ways. Here we include work with parents, community, and with other ECD practitioners. The major need for qualifications covers two kinds of work:

- Service development: ECD practitioners working with communities to set up and develop ECD provision
- Professional training: Trainers and support-staff working with ECD practitioners

*** Working with systems**

Some ECD practitioners need specialised qualifications in the management and administration of ECD programmes and services. Others need qualifications in research and materials development.

I will now ask Andile to take us a bit further.

The IAC Technical Secretariat has given us the following table to consider. It proposes certain categories of ECD practice, according to the age of children, and according to the work setting, for certain qualifications.

Let us look at the table and see how it works:

	1 (GETC)	2 (FETC)	3 (NQF 5)	4 (NQF 6)	5 (NQF 7/8)
Children: 0-3 years (baby/toddler phase)	baby care caregiver toddler caregiver	baby care assistant nursery assistant	baby care supervisor nursery teacher	programme/materials developer baby care	
Children: 2-6 years (preschool phase)	preschool caregiver playgroup assistant	assistant teacher playgroup leader	teacher playgroup supervisor	lead/senior teacher	programme/materials developer specialist
Children: 5-9 years (foundation phase)	after-school caregiver	assistant teacher	teacher	lead/senior teacher	programme/materials developer specialist
Children: 0-6 years (home-based)	childminder	childminder home visitor (support)	programme supervisor/ coordinator	programme/ materials developer	
Adult/child: Family programmes	assistant home visitor toy library assistant	home visitor parent educator	programme supervisor/ coordinator	programme/ materials developer	
Adult: training practitioner support		assistant trainer fieldworker	trainer (FET level) staff development	trainer (NQF 5) training coordinator	senior trainer lecturer (HET)
Adult: developer		community motivator	EC developer (district)	EC advisor (departmental)	senior planner policy developer
Administration Management	support staff home-based	admin assistant supervisor (small)	prog administrator supervisor (medium)	org administrator centre principal project director	institutional admin org director/rector dept managers

* If I qualified with a Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC) to work with children between the ages of 5 and 9, what kind of work would I qualify to do?

Answer: I would be an assistant teacher.

* If I wanted to develop materials for family ECD programmes, what qualification would I need?

Answer: I would need a diploma or degree at NQF level 6.

It might be a good idea for you to sit together in small groups and spend some time looking at this table. See if you can find yourself, or your interests, on the table and see what kind of qualification corresponds to your work or your interest.

The main question that you must consider at this stage is whether you think there are any serious problems with how the IAC has categorised ECD qualifications. When you have finished with the table I will hand over to George.

To finish off this section, I will just read out to you what is being proposed as a priority for the ECD Pilot Project:

"Types of qualification usually relate to the age of children that practitioners work with and the setting in which they work. The National Pilot Project focuses on the reception year (5-6 year olds) in community-based settings with younger children (2-6 year olds), but they are also provided for within the Foundation Phase in primary schools with older children (6-9 year olds). This creates an interesting challenge for standard-setting in the ECD sector.

It is proposed that:

* standard setting for the National Pilot Project focuses initially on work with children aged 2- 6 years in a group setting (usually centre-based, but including any group of more than 12 children).

* this will involve the development of core unit standards for the preschool and foundation phases as well as unit standards specific to the 2-6 age range."

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Yvonne will now talk to you about unit standards.

5. PROPOSALS ABOUT A FRAMEWORK FOR UNIT STANDARDS

Let me remind you about **unit standards.** Any qualification on the NQF is going to be made up of a number of credits. Credits are awarded when a unit-standard is achieved. A unit-standard is a collection of a number of specific learning outcomes. What we have to do is to look at how we can best organise the large number and wide variety of learning outcomes that are important for ECD, into a framework of unit standards. .

The first step that we need to take is to develop categories into which we can then organise all the learning outcomes that we need for ECD qualifications. The main question that we face here is,

"What kind of unit standard framework do we need for ECD?"

Take it away, Funeka.....

The national workshop put forward the following proposed framework for organising unit standards, which we need to consider:

* Safe, healthy learning environment (children)
* Physical and intellectual development (children)
* Social and emotional development (children)
* Co-workers, families and community (adults)
* Programme management and administration (systems)
* Personal and professional development (self)

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This framework is based on the roles and functions that ECD practitioners are expected to perform in various work situations or settings. Unit standards would be grouped into the categories offered by this framework. The unit standards that are developed in this framework would emphasise performance and practice.

Andile will tell us about other kinds of frameworks.

There are other kinds of frameworks that could be used. Many of them are based on knowledge or subjects rather than work roles. These frameworks make a division between knowledge and practice. They contain some unit standards to measure theory and others to measure performance.

So, you can see that when we decide on a framework for unit standards, we have to first know what kind of unit standards and learning outcomes we want. And to know that, we need to decide what we want people to be able to do with their learning. Connected to this, which we will look at in the next section, is how we want people to be assessed.

Basically, there are three main options regarding the kind of unit standards we want, and the kind of framework they should be put into:

* Performance-based unit standards which assume that knowledge (theory) is demonstrated through performance (practice). That knowledge must be identified and shown. Assessment of competence must look at performance and evidence of knowledge.

* Separate knowledge (theory) and performance (practice) unit standards, which can be assessed separately in different contexts as well as through some integrated methods of assessment.

* Each unit standard includes theory and practice outcomes. Although these outcomes can be assessed separately, it is better if they can be assessed together.

You can see that in looking at the kind of unit standards that we want, we are also starting to look at methods of assessment. That is what Rachel is going to speak to you about now.

6. PROPOSALS ABOUT METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

Hello again! There are many different opinions about how learning should be assessed and who should do assessments.

For us there are 3 questions to consider:

* **What methods of assessment are most suitable for assessing the competence of ECD practitioners?**

* **What methods can be used in the short term to assess prior learning so that training programmes can start as soon as possible in the ECD Pilot Project?**

* **Who should carry out the assessment of ECD practitioners and who should monitor or check that this assessment is correct.** In the long term we will have an Education and Training Quality Assurer to do the monitoring, but we also need something immediate for the ECD Pilot Project.

I will now go through each of these 3 questions in detail.

a. Methods of assessment.

There are 3 general methods that are used for assessment:

* The first approach relies heavily on written examinations. Although there is some evaluation of practical skills, the emphasis is on seeing how much a learner knows through a written exam.

* The second approach is called workplace assessment. A workplace assessment should involve assessing the practitioner in a situation where that person has real responsibility for the children. It requires clear criteria for assessment, external moderation, and some means of assessing a person's competence beyond what is immediately observed. Performance is assessed on specific learning outcomes.

* The third approach involves a mixture of assessment methods. It emphasises the overall qualification rather than specific outcomes. It combines an assessment of performance with other forms of assessment.

An example of this third approach, is the American Child Development Associate (CDA) programme. In this programme, assessment of an ECD practitioner is based on the following:

a. A professional resource file which must include:

- A written piece by the practitioner explaining who she is and why she is working with children

- A written piece by the practitioner explaining what he does in his work with children - this has to meet certain outcomes

- A collection of resources for work with children that have to meet certain criteria

b. A collection of questionnaires that parents of the children have completed, giving their opinion of the practitioner

c. CDA observer assessment which provides detailed guidelines for the observer to assess the performance of the practitioner

d. A multiple choice examination to assess general knowledge of good practices in ECD

e. An oral interview to test wider knowledge and its application to practical situations

This CDA assessment system might offer some specific methods that we could make use of.What do you think?

In the meantime, the national workshop in May proposes that we adopt the following general methods of assessment:

* Assessment of ECD practitioners in an authentic workplace situation should be the major method of assessment. Training providers involved in the ECD Pilot Project should participate in developing the performance indicators.

* A range of other tools should also be used to assess understanding and learning outcomes that cannot be directly observed or inferred from performance in the workplace. These tools should be appropriate to the level at which the practitioner is being assessed.

* Where appropriate, oral alternatives to written methods of assessment (such as assignments, portfolios, testing) should also be available.

We will now look at the second question relating to assessment.
I will ask George to take over here.

b. How to assess prior learning

On this issue we are only really concerned with a short term proposal. The national workshop has put forward a proposal about how prior learning and experience in ECD work should be assessed. This is important so that ECD practitioners in the Pilot Project can be immediately assessed and given further training. The proposal puts forward the factors that should be taken into account to assess practitioners and to place them in learning programmes. These factors are:

* The kind of training the person has had

* The experience the person has had in working with children

* The level of general education of the person. Here the concern must be with a general level of competence rather than simply the level of schooling

* An assessment of the person at work in the workplace

* An interview to explore prior learning and experience

* A written test, where appropriate, to assess the person's literacy level and their knowledge of ECD

It is important to understand that these criteria for recognition of prior learning are only proposed for the interim. Once unit-standards are set on the NQF, they will obviously be used to determine the accreditation of prior learning.

The last issue relating to assessment will be covered by Funeka.

c. Who will carry out and who will monitor assessments

Thanks, George.

The national workshop hosted by the IAC has put two questions in front of us on this issue. Both of them, as well as the proposal which follows, refers to the ECD Pilot Project.

* Who should be responsible for the direct assessment of ECD practitioners?
* Who should be responsible for external monitoring (quality assurance) of these assessments?

The proposal is as follows:

> * Trainers employed in the contracted training providers should be trained as the primary workplace assessors, and a suitably qualified coordinator within each training provider/consortium should be responsible for ensuring that the same standards and procedures are implemented.
>
> * A panel of suitably qualified moderators within each province should assist the Technical Secretariat with the external monitoring and quality assurance.
>
> * The panel at provincial level should consist of department officials and specially accredited assessors from training providers (who would be used as moderators for contracted training providers in which they are not employed).
>
> * The provinces and the contracted training providers are accountable to the IAC regarding the interim conditional accreditation of practitioners.

And now, it's back to Rachel.....

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6. CONCLUSION

Well folks, we have been through a lot of difficult stuff. Hopefully this presentation has been helpful. To conclude, let me just remind you of the questions that we have covered in Part Two of this booklet. These are the questions that you need to discuss and respond to in order to help shape policy development in ECD:

*** What qualifications are needed for ECD practitioners and at what levels should these qualifications fit into the NQF?**

*** What level descriptors are needed for each level of qualification?**

*** What kinds of qualifications are needed at each level, in order to suit the age of children being worked with and the setting in which practitioners work?**

*** What kind of unit standards do we want as the building blocks for ECD qualifications?**

*** In what ways should ECD practitioners be assessed? And who should do the assessments?**

When you discuss these questions, as well as the proposals that have been presented to you, you need to keep two things in mind:

1. On most of these questions short-term decisions are having to be taken for the ECD Pilot Project and long-term decisions need to be made for the ECD Sector as a whole.

2. You may have noticed that a decision on one question affects how you will answer another. For example, the unit standard framework will be affected by what kinds of qualifications are decided on. In the same way, methods of assessment, and who carries out assessments, will surely be influenced by what kind of unit standards are established.

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GLOSSARY

Accreditation
When a person is given a formal credit or recognition for their learning.

Assessment
The process of measuring what a person understands, knows, and can do.

Assessment Criteria
The standards against which a person's performance can be measured to see if they have achieved the outcome, or result, that is required.

Band
A broad grouping of levels of education and training. There are 3 bands on the NQF.

Competence
The ability of a person in an area of work. A person's competence shows a combination of knowledge, understanding, and practical application. A learner who achieves a successful learning outcome is given credit for their competence.

Credibility
Acceptance by people

Credit
The formal recognition that a learner has achieved the required outcome of a learning programme. In other words, a learner is accredited, or given a credit, for successfully achieving a unit standard.

Critical Outcomes
These are the broad outcomes which focus on people's ability to apply knowledge, understanding and skills to everyday life situations. For example, problem solving and communication are critical outcomes.

Curriculum
This is the overall framework of learning. It includes an identification of outcomes and designs a framework of subject matter and methods to achieve those outcomes.

Evaluation
This is the process through which the information that is obtained through an assessment of a learner is used to make judgements about that learner's competence.

Interim
Temporary

Integration
The bringing together of things that have been kept separate. The NQF seeks to

integrate education and training. OBE seeks to integrate theory and practice.

Learning Programme
A fairly detailed guide for learning. It contains specific outcomes, as well as suggested subject matter, methodologies and materials, for achieving those outcomes. It also contains guidelines for how achievement of an outcome can be assessed.

Legitimacy
Acceptance among people

Levels
Positions on the NQF where national unit standards are recognised and qualifications are awarded.

Level Descriptors
The general criteria that are assigned to levels on the NQF to ensure that a range of qualifications at a certain level meet up to the same general educational standard.

Lifelong Learning
A system of learning which encourages people to continue their education and training throughout their lives.

National Qualifications Framework
The system into which the government is trying to integrate all education and training and on which all standards and qualifications will be registered.

Outcomes-Based Education
An approach to education which emphasises the importance of what a learner is competent to do at the end of a learning experience.

Phases
Stages of development in a person. Identified in term of age.

Portability
Allows a person to carry their qualifications from one area of work or study to another

Practitioners
In ECD the practitioners are the people who teach and care for young children.

Progression
Allows a person to keep moving through different levels of education and training.

Reception Year
The year that links pre-primary to primary schooling. It will be established as part of formal schooling, as the year before grade one.

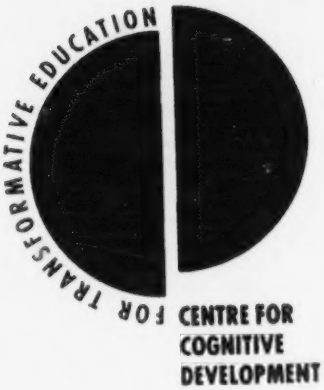
Specific Outcomes
Knowledge, understanding and skills that are shown in a particular context or situation, like a job or a specific course or an area of work.

Unit Standards
A unit standard states what specific outcomes must be achieved in a specific unit of learning. Achievement would be rewarded with a credit towards a qualification.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS BOOKLET

ECD	Early Childhood Development
IAC	Interim Accreditations Committee
LAC	Learning Area Committee
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

NOTES



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